THE DAILY STAR

BROOKLYN LETTER.

The Opera Season in Two Great Cities--Fashionable Display and Æsthetic Influences--The Past, Present and Future of Opera on This Continent.

Special Correspondence of the Star.

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Opera, that lovely offspring of European culture, is fast becoming acclimated here, and must, at a day not very remote, become a regularly naturalized American citizen. Having once attained citizenship, the hope is that a progeny thoroughly American, yet never reflecting discredit on their high-born lineage, will spring up so that the United States of the future can with justice lay claim to a native Wagner, Meyerbeer, Verdi, Rossini, Auber, Mozart or Donizetti. Indeed, I believe the day is close at hand when this country will rejoice in a native composer as thoroughly a master as any of the noble names I have just mentioned. Why should we not attain to this excellence in music? There was a time when our literature was pooh-poohed abroad, and even at home, but we found our Hawthorne, our Longfellow, our Emerson, our Motley, our Prescott, and are still progressing in literary achievements. And to-day there are those who cry out that we have no pictorial art, not knowin their ignorance th t in one department of painting—landscape—we are no whit behind Europe, but if anything slightly in advance. Powers, Crawford and Ward have also nobly pronounced for American genius in their sculptures, until it can no longer be charged that this is a statueless land. So that reasoning from analogy, and arguing from present glimmers of a coming dawn, I believe that I am not out of the way in predicting for music achievements as great as any won by the sister fine arts, and a fame perhaps as lofty as that which Germany, Italy or France possesses. But where will the star rise? In proud and wealthy New York? In lovely and cultured Brooklyn? In intellectual and art-fostering Boston? In sedate and appreciative Philadelphia? In enterprising and musically inclined Cincinnati, or in luxurious and seven-wonder San Francisco? Perhaps in none of these—rather in some retired American Nazareth, for genius claims a universe as its own, and its voice is as much respected when uttered in the lowly hamlet as in the boastful city. But the star will surely rise, and when it does we shall not have to wait for the Washington observatory to proclaim its presence.

It does not require a very severe stretch of memory to recall the time when we had no opera season here in New York and Brooklyn, and if we had none here, surely no one else on this continent had. Sedate, Puritanical New England, of course, could never be a starting point for opera in its full sense. And, excepting New England, twenty years ago what section of the United States but New York State could support the opera, pecuniarily and in respect of accommodations and stage appointments? Well, I know of none, and so speaking I do not wish to be understood as reflecting on any city, though to-day there are half a dozen cities in my mind that quite come up to the standard of requirements. But twenty years ago, even, we here had no opera season, in the highest acceptation of the term, nor even ten years ago. It is within ten years that Madame Nilsson made the tour of the United States, and since then several operatic stars have visited these shores, but their coming and going were fitful, and until a year ago, when Mapleson put fortunate foot in New York, opera managers had generally fared ill, and the public had little that they could regard as stable. But Mapleson opened the eyes of the public to the fact that an opera season in the two great sister cities could be successfully made a permanent thing.

Now I would not underrate or throw discredit on the efforts of other managers to naturalize opera here. What they accomplished is a matter of history; what they failed to accomplish must be ascribed rather to the indifference of the public and hard times than to any marked shortcomings on their own part.

But last year Mapleson with Her Majesty's Opera Company gave us an opera season simon pure, and following up his success he has this year repeated his triumph with added force and to the increased satisfaction of the public. The two scenes of his triumph have been the Academy of Music, New York, and the Academy of Music, Brooklyn, and though for Brooklyn the season closed last Thursday with Donizetti's "Linda Di Chamouni" and for New York will close the coming Saturday, it is hoped, though Mr. Mapleson's plans have not been made public, that his splendid company will return in the spring. But while Mapleson made the season, its attractions have been multiplied by Emma Abbott's highly meritorious English Opera Troupe and later still by Maurice Grau's artistic French Opera Company, so that there has hardly been a night for three months past that opera was not on the boards either of Brooklyn or New York.

Now, what does an opera season mean here, viewed from a fashionable standpoint? Well, in the first place, it means a readiness to part with fabulous sums of money for mere admissions. Here before me is the New York Academy of Music price-list, viz.: Parquet, $3 50; balcony, first three rows, $3 50; balcony, other rows, $3; private boxes, to admit four persons, $16, and so on down to $1 50 for general admission. Matinee prices range from $12 down to 50 cents. At Haverly's Theater, Brooklyn, where the French Opera was given, I note the prices, as follows: Orchestra chairs, $2; dress-circle, reserved, $1 50; and so on down to 50 cents for family circle admission (unreserved). The boxes were in demand at $15 and $20. There was the usual difference for matinees. Now such charges seem exorbitant, but are they when the enormous size of either of these companies are considered? And by a company I mean several relays of artists, large choruses, and orchestras embracing any where from twenty five to sixty musicians. Then, consider the expense attached to heating such a building as the Academy of Music, the richness and multiplicity of the costumes required, and last, but not least, the extent and fine quality of the scenery and stage machinery required, the same opera being seldom presented more than twice, generally but once.

People who are willing to pay such enormous prices to secure seats of course do not hesitate to indulge in extravagance in dress. The scene in this respect that I witnessed last Thursday night in New York when Mr. Mapleson's company rendered Meyerbeer's "Dinorah," was simply dazzling. Four-fifths of the ladies were richly attired, fully at least one-half being in full evening dress, viz., light colored silks, many cut with short sleeves; diamonds and laces in profusion. Their male escorts were dressed accordingly, appearing in swallow-tail coats, low-cut vests and black pantaloons. I noted also that gloves were a rarity among the gentlemen, and many ladies even dispensed with kids. I venture to say that there was at least $250,000 in evening silks and jewels in that audience, and these figures I believe to be below the truth a great way. And the wearers were as lovely as their dresses, though as I sat there and surveyed the scene of beauty, youth and wealth before me I could not help picturing to myself the changes that twenty years would produce in that assemblage, and how seventy-five years hence every one in that noble and proud audience would be a tenant in very different raiment of the "windowless palace of rest."

Not a very comfortable thought, perhaps, but it does every one good now and then to pause, reflect and moralize, even while waiting for the curtain to rise on Mlle. Marie Marimon, Signor Galassi, and our own renowned countrywoman, Miss Annie Louise Cary, though on the programme the plain, old-fashioned Miss assumed the French garb of Madamoiselle.

Well, I have not space or time to criticise the production of "Dinorah;" indeed, if I were to attempt to indulge in criticism, it would only be to praise everything and everybody. Then, too, in order to even things, I would have to speak of the other artists of the company, Signor Campanini, Mme. Emilie Ambre, Herr Behrens, and Mlle. Alwina Valleria. Then, too, I might be expected to treat with like care such famous members of the French Opera Company as M. Capoul, Mlle. Paola-Maria and Mlle. Angele. Cincinnati will possibly have an opportunity to hear some of these people, and if so she will enjoy a treat.

To the wealthy the "season" has been a means of whiling away a good deal of spare time in a very satisfactory manner; to the poor it has proved a source of employment in demand for fine clothes and various services. Generally speaking it has been a means of æsthetic culture. Shopkeepers have of course profited by it, and the effect in a business sense is therefore good, though the political economist will doubtless argue that too much capital has become tied up or gone to waste in rich toilets and costly baubles.

CRAS.

Canadian Politics.

[Toronto Globe.]

The following story is told for a fact, and it will perhaps throw some light on the general results of the voting at the last Dominion elections: On the day of the elections a woman went into a a butcher's shop in a Western town and asked for a sheep's head. The butcher promptly put his hands on one, and was giving it to the purchaser, when she inquired if it was a Liberal or a Tory head. The man of beef was nonplussed for the moment, and then said, on chance, that it was a Liberal. "Aw winnet ha' it, then," was the woman's reply, and she was making toward the door, when the butcher, not willing to lose a customer for the want of a little accommodation, called out to her: "Here, misses, wait a minute, and I'll soon make it into a Tory for you." The woman turned back, and the butcher at once split open the head, took out the brains, and handed it over as a "real Tory." The woman departed with it triumphantly.

Three for Twenty-five.

[Detroit Free Press.]

After a Griswold street barber had finished shaving a stranger yesterday the man asked what the charge was, and when told that it was 10 cents, he asked:

"Don't you have any wholesale rates? Wouldn't you give me three shaves for 25 cents?"

"Yes, I reckon I could do dat."

"Then go ahead and shave me twice more!" said the stranger, as he climbed back into the chair.

The barber lathered, shaved, recombed his hair, and cried "Brush!" and the man reseated himself and took a third shave without a word. His face had a lobster color when he got through, but he handed out a quarter and said:

"I don't know but it would have been better to take seven shaves for half a dollar, but this will do just now."

Reidsville (Va.) Times: Mr. Wormley, a very wealthy man who lived in Chesterfield, Va., had two sons, Tom and Jack, both fond of playing poker, but Jack was very sharp at the game and Tom very flat. When the old man died he left Tom $90,000 and Jack only $1,000, but he explained at the foot of his will that $1,000 was just stake enough for Jack to win everything that Tom had, and it was a wise provision, for so it turned out.

To Make Gilt-Edge Butter.

Every dairyman wishes to get the top price for his butter. It can be done only by having it perfect in quality and appearance. When the color becomes light it is necessary to add a little of Wells, Richardson & Co.'s Perfected Butter Color to keep it up to the June standard. Many well-known butter buyers recommend all their patrons to use only this preparation, as it gives the most perfect color.

PITH OF THE PRESS.

Indianapolis News (Ind.): Erring Brother Key wins the first round in the fight against the lottery dealers. Keep him fresh and give him room.

Chicago News (Ind.): The Grant "boom" is only tangled up among the Quaker legs under Philadelphia tables. It will emerge when the General starts for Cuba.

Chicago Journal (Rep.): The two great Democratic victories of 1879 are the killing of Captain Dixon in Yazoo, Miss., and the stealing of the Legislature of Maine.

Chicago Times (Ind.): The Democrats were tricked in 1876 and endured the outrage. The Republicans of Maine were tricked a few days ago, but won't endure it at all. That's the difference between the parties.

Mobile Register (Dem.): We call upon Senator Morgan to throw no stumbling block in the way of return to Constitutional money, so ardently longed for and so loudly demanded by all the business centers of the country.

Chicago Inter-Ocean (Rep.): They've settled it. That is, both the Cincinnati Commercial and Enquirer announce that Grant will be a candidate. And as they make the announcement their teeth rattle like the caving in of a gravel mine.

Milwaukee Sentinel (Rep.): Governor Garcelon should be immediately "mentioned" for the Democratic nomination. He is in every way worthy to succeed Cipher Tilden as the Bourbon candidate. He hasn't so big a bar'l, but more check and nerve.

Boston Traveller (Rep.): Don Cameron says his preference is for General Grant first, last and every time, and that in so saying he merely echoes the Pennsylvania Republican sentiment. Whoever is nominated will receive their cordial support, but they mean to have Grant.

Milwaukee Signal (Ind.): "Have not the Democrats as good a right to steal a State as the Republicans to steal the General Government?" — [Exchange. Perhaps; but both parties are thieves; and if they could be tied together like cats and hung across a line till they devoured each other, the country would have a chance at honesty and fair dealing once more.

New York Times (Rep.): If fraud, "first triumphant" in the Pine-tree State, is successful in clutching the present object of its endeavor, it must inevitably be at the price of turning the conscience of the State against the perpetrators and against the party that benefits by their acts. If such a performance shall fail to be visited with an overwhelming condemnation at next year's election, then, indeed, will those who are inclined to despair of the Republic have some reason to show for their gloomy forebodings.

New York Sun (Ind. Dem.): The fight in Maine is not a fight between the Republicans and Democrats, but between the Republicans and all others, of whom the Greenbackers are a large majority. The Governor is a Democrat, or more properly a Fusionist, but the majority of the Council which did the counting are Greenbackers, and if the men to whom certificates have been issued as members of the Legislature keep their seats it will result in the election of the Greenback candidate for Governor.

New York Tribune (Rep.): Judge Lyman Trumbull is the first prominent Democratic leader to make a public defense of the Maine theft. At a recent meeting of the Illinois Democratic State Committee, he opposed the adoption of a resolution disapproving the crime, saying that the Democrats were merely paying the Republicans back in their own coin for the fraud of 1876, and that there was nothing wrong in the Maine business anyway. There is something inharmonious in this defense. The Judge has been charging fraud upon the Republican party with great vehemence since 1876. Nobody doubts his sincerity in the matter; yet he says that the Democrats are paying back in the same coin, but are doing no wrong. Does he mean that fraud is no wrong when it is committed by the Democratic party? Or does he mean that there was no wrong in the alleged Republican fraud in 1876? If he means the latter, what has he been crying aloud about during the past three years?

JESSIE JAMES, OUTLAW.

An Instance Where the Desperado was Merciful—An Affecting Scene.

[Kansas City Times.]

Detective Pinkerton has given the James boys the name of being bloodthirsty wretches, who could never be moved from their purpose of killing when once they made up their minds. A gentleman from Clay County, however, related one instance to a Kansas City reporter the other night which serves to show that there was at one time at least a tender spot in the heart of Jesse. The story, as told by the gentleman, is that a few years ago a man, together with his family, lived on a portion of Mrs. Samuels' farm. He rented so many acres from the old lady, and the renter and Mrs. Samuels fattened a beef in copartnership.

When the beef was killed they fell out over a division of the spoils. Each claimed the hide and tallow. The dispute waxed warm, until the man, in a heat of passion, said to Mrs. Samuels, "You are an old liar." The old lady, looking straight at him, said, "I shall tell Jesse about this," and turning on her heel, went into the house. The next day, as Mrs. Samuels' tenant was standing in the road in front of his house, conversing with Mr. Chancellor, of Clay County, a noise was heard in the cornfield adjoining, and in a few minutes a horse and rider jumped the rail fence, and Jesse James stood in the presence of the man who had insulted his mother. At sight of Jesse the man turned as pale as death, and looked as if he were about to sink into the earth.

Riding close to him Jesse said: "Didn't you know that I would kill you for the language you used toward my mother? If you have anything to say do it quickly, for you have only a short time to live."

Just at this time the wife of the apparently doomed man came screaming out of the house, begging Jessie not to kill her husband. With a stern command of "Get back in the house, Madam, quick," the woman went in weeping bitterly, and with strained nerves she awaited the dead crack of Jesse's revolver which would make her a widow. Turning to the trembling man before him, Jesse said: "Get down on your knees and ask forgiveness for your sins before I kill you."

Dropping down on his knees in the middle of the public road, the man offered up such a prayer to God as was never heard in the old county of Clay. The gentleman, an unwilling spectator to the affair, said he never heard such a touching and beautiful prayer in his life. With the tears streaming down his face, the man beseeched the Almighty to receive his soul and take care of his children and wife, soon to be without a father and husband. Mr. Chancellor, during the prayer, glanced several times at Jesse, who, with drawn pistol, sat sternly on his horse looking at the supplicant before him.

Before the prayer was concluded the stern lines upon Jesse's face seemed to relax from their wonted serenity, and hope dawned upon the mind of the gentleman that Jesse would relent from his stern purpose. At the conclusion of the prayer the man closed his eyes and awaited the expected shot that would send him into eternity. But he was not destined to die. The words of supplicance had touched the better chords of Jesse's heart, and the demon within him was subdued. Addressing the still kneeling man he said: "I ought to kill you, but for the sake of your wife and children I will spare your life. I will give you six hours to get out of this country. Go quick, before I change my mind."

The reprieved man arose to his feet and poured out such a volume of thankful gratitude that the heart of the gentleman present was melted into tears, and he wept like a child. Jesse, apparently stern and unmoved, listened until he was through, and then, motioning him away, gathered up the lines of his bridle and disappeared in the field. The man hastened into his house, and the joyful meeting with his wife on the threshold of the door was an occasion never to be forgotten.

In less than the time given by Jesse to leave, the man, his family and their effects were loaded into wagons and going in the direction of more friendly shores.

A Reporter's Luck.

[Pittsburg Paper.]

During an excursion from this city to Niagara Falls, and while at Cleveland, an incident occurred which will never be forgotten by those who heard it. The Kennard House, in that city, was crowded with guests, when an eccentric and witty druggist of Smithfield street appeared late at night at the hotel office and demanded a bed. The clerk replied that there were only two vacant beds in the house—one, wherein was quartered a Pittsburg morning-newspaper man, and the other room wherein was a Pittsburg evening-newspaper man, who were with the excursion. "To tell the truth, they are both pretty drunk; so you may take your choice as to which room you will sleep in."

The druggist said that on general principles he would take his chances with the evening newspaper journalist, as he would doubtless be so drunk that he would lie dormantly quiet all night. He went to bed and was soon sound asleep. The journalist, however, awakened about 12 o'clock, and thinking it a long time between drinks, dressed himself, unconsciously, in the druggist's clothes, and sallied out to make a night of it. Ever and anon he muttered, as he treated all present, "Fnuniest thing I ever heard of! When I went to bed last night I only had 25 cents to my name, and now I've got over $100 (showing a corpulent roll of bills); and I'm bound to spend every cent of it before morning" He did.

Mr. Gladstone's Week's Work.

[London Times.]

There is one respect in which no one can refuse a tribute of admiration to Mr. Gladstone's performances in Scotland. Having regard to his age, to the weather, to the nature of his audiences, and to the length of his speeches, his present rhetorical campaign must certainly be regarded as one of the most extraordinary physical feats on record—perhaps the most extraordinary. Last week he delivered four speeches, occupying about six columns each, before crowded assemblies, and the last was at least as vigorous as the first. On Monday he traveled from Edinburg through Dunfermline, Perth and Dunkeld to Aberfeldy; and at each stage of his journey, during the stray half hours or five minutes which the train allowed him, he was as ready to make a new speech as if he had made none before. The weather seems to be as cold in Scotland as it is here, and most men of seventy would hesitate before so much as putting their heads out of window on a Scotch journey. Mr. Gladstone, too, has more work before him. He is to-day to deliver a political speech, and it is not until Saturday that he will return to comparative rest at Hawarden. Englishmen and Scotchmen can appreciate such a display of endurance and energy. The intellectual force and rhetorical vivacity displayed are not less remarkable, and men of all parties will agree that Mr. Gladstone has proved himself a more wonderful personage than ever.